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News & Notes

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Sullivan urges BUMC audience to 'become engaged' in health-care debate

Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan, M.D., a graduate of the School of Medicine and a former faculty member, urged students and staff to become "engaged in the coming debate on the health-care system," during a Dec. 19 speech to more than 200 people gathered in BUSM's Keefer Auditorium.

Sullivan, this year's William Castle Visiting Professor, told the audience, "As my laboratory and my vision have expanded from a bench at the Thorndike [Memorial Laboratory] to include the care of Americans all over the nation, so too must yours.... Like William Castle, become renaissance physicians. Seek to meet the many needs of your patients and of the society around you."

Before the Castle Lecture, Sullivan attended morning report at Boston City Hospital and discussed two patient cases with BCH residents. Later in the day, he discussed hematology cases with residents in the Hematology Laboratory at BUSM.

After graduating cum laude from BUSM in 1958, Sullivan completed his training in medicine and hematology at BCH. Sullivan returned to Boston in 1966 as an assistant professor of medicine at BUSM; he was named a professor of medicine and physiology in 1974. He served on the staff at both BCH and the University Hospital. A prominent hematologist, he was the first project director of the Sickle Cell Anemia Center at BCH and was co-director of hematology at UH.

The lecture is named after William B. Castle, M.D., who came to BCH in 1925 as a resident at the Thorndike Memorial Laboratory and stayed on to become director of that laboratory and of the Second and Fourth Medical Services. Castle, who retired in 1968, is best known for his elucidation of the role of intrinsic factor in pernicious anemia and his contributions to the understanding of the basis of other anemias. To generations of students and house staff he also is known for his modesty, brilliant intellect, sense of humor and insightful teaching.

Study shows aspirin does not cause infants' risk of congenital heart defects

Women who take aspirin during the first trimester of their pregnancy do not increase their infants' risk of certain congenital heart defects, according to a recent BUSM study. The study, which was published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, was conducted by researchers at the Slone Epidemiology Unit of the School of Public Health.

The researchers obtained their data from interviews with 1,855 women who had infants with heart abnormalities. They compared the women's responses with those of 6,966 women who had babies with other birth defects. On average, all of the interviews were conducted within four months after delivery.



Pictured following the Castle Lecture were, left to right, Dean Aram Chobanian; Alan S. Cohen, M.D., vice chairman of the Division of Medicine, Conrad Wesselhoef Professor of Medicine, and a professor of pharmacology and experimental therapeutics; and Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan, M.D. (photo by Jeffrey Dunn)

"Our results suggest that the use of aspirin during the early months of pregnancy, when the fetal heart is developing, is not associated with an increased risk of cardiac defects overall," the researchers wrote. The BUSM study differed from an earlier study's findings suggesting that aspirin use might increase the risk of heart malformations.

Researchers involved in the study included Martha M. Werler, Sc.D., a junior epidemiologist; Allen A. Mitchell, M.D., an associate professor of public health (epidemiology and biostatistics), a research assistant in medicine and associate director of the Slone Epidemiology Unit; and Samuel Shapiro, M.B.B.Ch., a research professor of public health (epidemiology and biostatistics) and director of the Slone Epidemiology Unit.

New method developed to study important cellular process

BUSM researchers have confirmed the process by which some molecules selectively enter the cell nucleus, and they have developed a simple *in vitro* system to study this process. This knowledge eventually could help scientists understand how to intervene in this process and thus prevent the replication of certain types of viruses, including the AIDS virus.

The regulated transport of specific molecules to and from the nucleus is an essential factor in all cellular processes. Recent studies have suggested that some molecules are equipped with specific nuclear location signals (NLS) that bind—with varying degrees of efficiency—to receptors that mediate their transport across the nuclear envelope (NE) into the nucleus. Questions still remain concerning whether each signal has a separate recep-

tor, whether signals compete with varying degrees of efficiency for the same receptors or whether both processes are in effect.

In the December issue of *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, BUSM researchers confirmed an interaction between the NLS of one viral tumor-inducing protein and NE receptors. More importantly, they developed and proved the efficacy of a new system that uses immunofluorescence to visualize the binding process and to identify the binding site.

According to Norbert Riedel, Ph.D., an assistant professor of medicine, the system—which is simple yet specific—will help scientists study the regulated exchange of materials between the two major cellular compartments. "This system will help us to test the number of different receptor signals and the number of receptors for which they are competing, and will help us determine whether similar or dissimilar mechanisms are involved."

Once the process is understood, researchers can search for ways to prevent nuclear uptake of and transformation by certain tumor-inducing proteins and can look for ways to interfere with the nuclear export and assembly of the AIDS virus genome.

Faculty member is first foreigner to appear before Soviet committee

Anthony Robbins, M.D., a professor of public health, recently visited the Soviet Union, where he was the first foreigner to appear before a committee of the Supreme Soviet, the governing body of the Soviet Union. Robbins gave a 40-minute presentation on the health and environmental consequences of 40 years of nuclear weapons production. His purpose was to try to per-

sue the Soviet government to release data on nuclear weapons production.

According to Robbins, it is clear that the use of nuclear weapons poses a tremendous danger, but it is not clear whether building them presents a hazard as well. Currently, little data exists on the exposure of workers who build nuclear weapons and people who live around the plants, or on the consequences of releases of radioactivity into the environment.

Modern medicine can learn from ancient Egyptians, new book by Estes suggests

J. Worth Estes, M.D., a professor of pharmacology, examines ancient Egyptian healing methods and explores their relevance to modern medicine in his new book, *The Medical Skills of Ancient Egypt*.

"By looking at how an ancient society maintained its health in the absence of what today we consider effective medical interventions, we can gain clues to what happens when the body is left to its own healing devices," said Estes. "Today, it is often assumed that all medical intervention is necessarily good, but that assumption may not be valid in all cases."

In his book, Estes says that an exploration of the medical skills of ancient Egypt teaches that the practice of watchful waiting sometimes may be an optimal approach to healing. He suggests that we look upon the lessons of the past as well as those of the present as we try to achieve a balance between relying on medical treatment and understanding our own healing capacities.

Founders of BUSM/Hadassah Medical School Exchange Program are honored

A plaque honoring Louis and Charlotte Kaitz for their generosity in establishing the BUSM/Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School Exchange Program recently was unveiled in the Instructional Building of the School. Following the ceremony, a luncheon was held for Mr. and Mrs. Kaitz and for two visiting Israeli students.

The students, Ronen Jaffe and Eyal Banin, agreed that the Program had broadened their perspectives and that they would return to Israel with "a wealth of medical knowledge and experience" that would make them better physicians. Dean Aram Chobanian said he was pleased with the excellent educational experience that the Program provides for BUSM and Hadassah students, and thanked Mr. and Mrs. Kaitz for helping to make this program possible.



Present at the BUSM/Hadassah Medical School Exchange Program luncheon were, (front row, left to right), Herbert Tobin, director of the Office of Development; Dean Aram Chobanian; Charlotte and Louis Kaitz, the benefactors of the Program; and Leonard S. Gottlieb, M.D., chairman of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and director of the Program. Also present were (second row, left to right), Al Rosen, executive director of the New England Region of the American Friends of Hebrew University; Edward Alexander, M.D., a professor of medicine, a research professor of physiology and associate director of the Program; and Ronen Jaffe and Eyal Banin, students from the Hadassah Medical School. (photo by David Keough, BUSM Educational Media Support Center)

Edelin receives civil-rights award; is elected as chairperson of PPFA

Kenneth C. Edelin, M.D., associate dean for student and minority affairs, was awarded the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Award "for his lifelong commitment to social and political change," on January 20. The award, sponsored by the Rainbow Coalition and the School of Theology's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Program, was presented at the fifth annual Boston Rainbow Coalition Leadership Banquet.

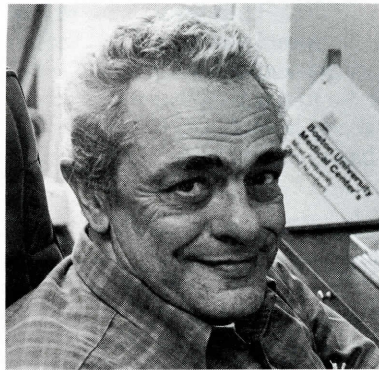
Edelin also recently was elected to serve as the 1989-90 chairperson of Planned Parenthood Federation of America. He previously served on the PPFA board from 1979-1985. Edelin is former chairman of obstetrics and gynecology at BUSM and director of obstetrics and gynecology at Boston City Hospital.

Dermatology fellow receives Daland Resident's Award of Cancer Society

Janet S. Wieselthier, M.D., a fellow in dermatology, recently was honored as one of four recipients of the Daland Resident's Award from the New England Cancer Society. Wieselthier received the award at the Society's 50th annual meeting in Newport, R.I., for her presentation of an abstract titled "Extracorporeal Photopheresis in the Treatment of Lymphoproliferative Malignancies." Currently, Wieselthier is researching cutaneous T cell lymphoma and extracorporeal photopheresis with Howard K. Koh, M.D., an assistant professor of dermatology and public health (epidemiology and biostatistics) and medicine.

Teager, pioneer in speech and hearing, dies at 59; Memorial is Mar. 25

Herbert M. Teager, Sc.D., a research professor of medicine at BUSM and head of the biomedical engineering section of the University Hospital since 1966, died of lung cancer at his home in Belmont on Jan. 8, 1990. He was 59.



A pioneer in the fields of speech production and hearing, Teager spent many years studying the characteristics of the human vocal tract and its use as a passive medical diagnostic tool. He developed a new model for speech production as well as novel techniques for analyzing the speech wave form. He also conducted research centered

on the integration of computers into the practice of medicine, particularly as an aid in patient monitoring.

In December 1989, Teager and his wife and research associate, Shushan Teager, were honored with the award of a Sloan Foundation grant. This grant was awarded in recognition

of their work in the speech and hearing sciences.

Teager leaves his wife, Shushan, and their sons, Stephen and Daniel. A memorial service is planned for March 25.

Faculty member organizes drive for medical supplies to aid Panama

Marcelle Willock, M.D., chairman and professor of anesthesiology, is raising funds and gathering medical supplies to aid Panamanians left homeless by the American invasion. Willock, who also is chief of the Department of Anesthesiology at the University Hospital, estimates that 25,000 people may have lost their homes as a result of the invasion.

A native of Panama, Willock immigrated to the United States in 1954 and has remained committed to helping her fellow Panamanians over the years. Her family's foundation, called Fondation Deveaux, provides clothing, food and other assistance to Panama's poor throughout the year.

Those interested in making a contribution can deliver goods to UH's Department of Anesthesiology at 88 East Newton Street or send checks to Fondation Deveaux, c/o Dr. Willock, the University Hospital, 88 East Newton Street, Boston, MA 02118.

Campus Security establishes new emergency number, x5000

The Medical Campus Security Department has established a new emergency number among the other measures being implemented to combat campus crime. To report a crime in progress, call the new emergency number, 638-5000 (x5000). To report an incident after the fact, call 638-4568 (x4568).

ACS research grants available to serve as cancer-study 'seed' money

The Hubert H. Humphrey Cancer Research Center at BUMC has been awarded an Institutional Grant from the National Chapter of the American Cancer Society to encourage young investigators (junior faculty, post-doctorates) to carry out cancer-related research. The primary purpose of the grant is to provide "seed" money to permit initiation of promising new projects or novel ideas that will serve as basis for future grant applications from other programs. The awards will vary according to the needs of the investigator and should not exceed \$6,000. The majority of allocations will be made to persons who have not received prior grant support.

Applications will be awarded on a competitive basis and evaluated according to criteria described in the application forms. Application forms are available from the Cancer Research Center office, the School of Medicine, Conte Research Building (K) 701, 638-4173 (x4173).

The deadline for applications is March 6, 1990.

Upcoming CME course

"Behavioral Pediatrics: Clinical Problems in Primary Care" will be presented by the Department of Pediatrics and the Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics on March 16 and 17 at The Charles Hotel in Cambridge. The course director is Barry S. Zuckerman, M.D., an associate professor of pediatrics and public health. For further information, contact the Department of Continuing Medical Education at 638-4605 (x4605).

Briefly noted

James O. Menzoian, M.D., a professor of surgery, recently was appointed counselor of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American College of Surgeons....The Department of Urology

and the Section of Medical Oncology recently sponsored a half-day symposium on the innovations in the diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer. Participating BUSM faculty members were **Richard K. Babayan, M.D.**, an associate professor of urology; **Paul J. Hesketh, M.D.**, an assistant professor of medicine; and **Robert J. Krane, M.D.**, a professor and chairman of the Department of Urology....An article by Krane, **Irwin Goldstein, M.D.**, an associate professor of urology, and **Inigo Saenz de Tejada, M.D.**, an assistant research professor of urology, recently was published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. The article reviewed the progress made in diagnosing and treating impotence.

News & Notes is a publication of the Office of Publication Services. If you have news of interest to the BUSM community, please contact Angela Cochran, x8482 (638-8482) or write to her at the Office of Publication Services, DOB-915 (720 Harrison Ave., Boston, MA 02118).

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